



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SIGN AGREEMENTS TO SERVE THREE NEW VETERANS HOMES OF CALIFORNIA

West Los Angeles – In a unique example of effective partnerships, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), signed important agreements today that will provide medical, pharmaceutical and food services to more than 500 veterans who will be living in the new state veterans homes being built on the campus of the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center and in the communities of Lancaster and Ventura.

“This unique partnership will help to provide outstanding continuity of care between federal and state services and treatment at the new Veteran’s Homes,” said CalVet Acting Secretary Roger Brautigan. “The Department is delighted we were able to reach this major milestone in the establishment of these new Veterans Homes and we are eager to move forward toward the delivery of excellent healthcare services for California’s deserving veterans.”

“I want to thank the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System for their unwavering support and teamwork on this most important accomplishment,” Brautigan added.

Donna Beiter, Director for the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System noted, “The signing of these agreements today guarantees that Veterans residing in these Homes will be able to receive the exceptional quality of care that they deserve. Working in concert with CalVet, we are proud to have developed a partnership that is truly unique within all of VA, and one that we are certain will allow us to better serve the Veterans for whom we have joint responsibility.”

The Sharing Agreements involve contracting various healthcare services from the USDVA to CalVet’s three new Veterans Homes in Southern California and food services for the largest facility in West Los Angeles.

The West Los Angeles facility -- which broke ground on the property of the USDVA’s Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System campus in July, 2007 after a transfer of some 12 acres of

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property to the State of California -- will be contracting medical care, pharmacy services and food services. This 396-bed Veterans Home, the largest of the three currently under construction, is estimated to open in mid-2010 and will house a Skilled Nursing Facility with Alzheimer's/dementia care, as well as Residential Care for the Elderly (RCFE).

The Lancaster and Ventura sites will accommodate 60 veteran residents each for RCFE services and will be contracting for the USDVA's medical and pharmacy services only. Both facilities are estimated to open this fall.

Collectively, the three state Veterans Homes that are part of this agreement are referred to as the Veterans Homes of California—Greater Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Individually, the new Homes are referred to as the Veterans Home of California—West Los Angeles; the William J. "Pete" Knight Veterans Home of California—Lancaster; and the Veterans Home of California—Ventura. All Veterans Homes of California are built as an expression of gratitude toward California's veterans.

Both the USDVA and CalVet's missions are to deliver excellence in patient care and veterans' benefits and services to veterans and their families, with a vision for veterans to live the highest quality of life with dignity and honor -- and to provide the highest quality healthcare and enhanced quality of life for all veterans and Veterans' Home residents.

The Veterans Homes of California provide veterans with a living environment that protects their dignity and contributes to their feeling of self-reliance and self-worth. The Homes' amenities are intended to provide residents excellent care in a homelike environment and foster a sense of community.

In order to be eligible for admission to a Veterans Home of California, an applicant must be age 62 or older (or younger if disabled), a resident of California, and have served honorably in the military.

A Statement of Intent to Apply for the West Los Angeles site, is available at: www.cdva.ca.gov/Homes/DocsAndImages/statementofintentform.pdf, and can be mailed to CalVet's temporary office at 6150 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 305, Van Nuys, CA 91401. Applications for the West Los Angeles site will be mailed out in late 2009 or early 2010, approximately six months prior to opening.

Veterans Homes of California are also in operation in Yountville, Barstow and Chula Vista. Future sites are in planning stages for Fresno and Redding.

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About a quarter of the nation's population -- approximately 70 million people -- are potentially eligible for USDVA benefits and services because they are veterans, family members or survivors of veterans. For additional information, please log onto the USDVA's website at **www.va.gov**.

Of the nation's 23 million veterans, some 2.1 million reside in California. Since the 19th Century, California has maintained a historic commitment to caring for veterans and their families. "We are proud of our legacy of outstanding service in caring for California's veteran community and coordinating California's veteran benefits programs," added Brautigan. "And we will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to maintain that commitment. The health and welfare of our veterans is our number one priority."

For additional information on the Veterans Homes of California, as well as Veterans benefits, employment, educational resources, services, Home Loans, Veterans license plates -- including fundraising for the Gold Star Family License Plate -- and more, please log onto the CalVet website at **<http://www.calvet.ca.gov>**.

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